

DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT GUIDE



**THE BASICS OF SOCIAL MEDIA &
CONTENT CREATION FOR YOUR CHAPTER**

VERSION 1.0



HIGH SCHOOL DEMOCRATS *of* AMERICA

POLICIES TO KNOW

Before you begin, know that everything on this list comes down to good judgment. All content you decide post is public and available for all to see, so do not post anything that you would otherwise not be willing to see published or broadcast.

OVERVIEW

Your access to and use of these resources is conditioned on your acceptance of and compliance with these Terms. These Terms apply to all users who have been granted access these resources. By accessing or using these resources, you agree to be bound by these Terms. If you disagree with any part of the Terms, then you may not access these resources.

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TERMS OF USE

THIS GUIDE, ANY SUPPLEMENTAL DOCUMENTS AND THE RESOURCES PROVIDED TO YOU BY THE HIGH SCHOOL DEMOCRATS OF AMERICA (HSDA) OR ITS AFFILIATES ARE INTENDED FOR AUTHORIZED HSDA-RELATED USE ONLY, AND MAY NOT BE USED FOR THE BENEFIT OF ANY OTHER CLIENT, ORGANIZATION OR PARTY.

Endorsements: Article II, Section 210c of our bylaws states that “the High School Democrats of America shall be forbidden from endorsing any candidate for office which has yet to win the respective primary election.” This regulation applies to state chapters.

Voice: All messages that might be perceived as the “voice” or position of either your state chapter or the High School Democrats of America should be pre-approved by the Communications Director.

Objectionable content: You may not post or share content that is offensive, threatening, or obscene. We reserve the right to delete content that we deem offensive, threatening, libelous, defamatory, obscene, objectionable, or violates intellectual property laws.

Promotion: Any promotion of products and/or organizations that is not part and/or affiliated with the High School Democrats of America is strictly prohibited unless pre-approved by the Executive Board.

Bias: Under no circumstances are you to post anything that indicates your personal and political biases or viewpoints in a way that may reflect unfavorably upon HSDA’s reputation or the reputation of the Democratic Party.

Improper use: Any improper/objectionable usage of state chapter social media accounts for self promotion is prohibited.

Community guidelines: You must abide by the terms of service or community guidelines of the platforms you use. Failure to follow them may result in the freezing or deletion of your account with no advance notice.

AT A GLANCE

Reaching your members and the public is crucial, and following these guidelines (which apply across all platforms, particularly Facebook and Twitter) will help you build up a successful and professional digital presence.

THE BASICS

What to do: Tips and suggestions.

- Make sure each Facebook post/tweet/Tumblr post has a photo
- Like a Facebook post with your personal Facebook account, not as your page
- Use bit.ly or another link shortening service to condense your links
- Tag any relevant people/organizations/companies involved
- Respond to any comments, mentions, inquiries, if appropriate
- Do not engage in any “comment wars”
- Tone can be conversational, laid-back and snarky when necessary
- Provide your own commentary on retweets/shares
- Be succinct, but not too blunt as to take away full context
- Posting memes or GIFs are generally discouraged (but can be appropriate in certain situations)

What to share: Examples of sharable, engaging content

- Relevant opinion pieces from reputable sources
- Breaking news from reputable sources
- Action items
- Photos and graphics
- Videos
- Vetted informational content
- Anything HSDA-related
- Live tweets (Twitter-specific)

Specific guidelines: Photos and graphics

- Must not be grainy, pixilated or low quality
- Do not use any photo splicers or image hosts that include logos other than HSDA branding
- Must abide by and meet HSDA branding standards
- Must abide by terms and conditions

Establishing a web presence: Launching a website

- If you want your chapter to have a website, we recommend Squarespace or Wordpress
- To launch a blog, we recommend using Medium.com

SOCIAL MEDIA

INACTIVITY AND TIME COMMITMENT

Developing an effective social media presence requires careful planning, skill, and a significant amount of time. Social media accounts require ongoing attention, so it's important that you're dedicated to maintaining them over time. Inactive accounts reflect poorly on the High School Democrats of America, so carefully consider whether you can devote the time and resources to running an account.

SELECT THE RIGHT PLATFORM

A state chapter should ideally have both Facebook and Twitter accounts, although we encourage you to experiment with other platforms including (but not limited to) Instagram, Tumblr and Snapchat). There are obviously key differences, and this guide focuses solely on Facebook and Twitter as the primary platforms of communication.

PROFILE PICTURES

Your avatar and profile images are not to be overlooked, and should be your state chapter branding. No matter which feed you end up in, your profile image identifies who you are at a glance. *Please refer to our branding guide for information on logos, colors, fonts, and more.*

ESTABLISH A VOICE

What to do: Tips and suggestions.

- Establish a fun and consistent voice that includes the following:
- Be friendly, approachable and responsive
- Use inclusive language (us, we, you)
- Talk like a person, not a machine or marketer

MANAGING YOUR ACCOUNTS

We encourage you to have at least one or two individuals managing any social media accounts at a time. An ideal account manager should be:

- An established social media user who utilizes social networks personally and regularly.
- Interested in keeping up with social media and marketing trends.
- A strong communicator with solid writing skills (with a history of well-written posts with proper grammar and no typos)
- Capable of editing images, and should have some basic design skills that will help in the creation of dynamic content.
- Able to demonstrate sound judgment.

SHORTEN YOUR LINKS

Do not post full links. Instead, make good use of URL shorteners like bit.ly to track the number of clicks. They also make your links more manageable and user-friendly, and ensure that you can fit more content in less space.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ANALYTICS

Most social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter have insight panels that show analytics and reach. Review and track this information regularly to determine what is effective, and adjust your content based on this intelligence.

CONTENT STRATEGY

ORIGINAL CONTENT

Content is key to growing an audience, and state chapters are encouraged to post an optimal mix of news, links, and multimedia content. Create as much original content as possible instead of sharing to improve your reputation, boost reach, and drive engagement on your social media accounts.

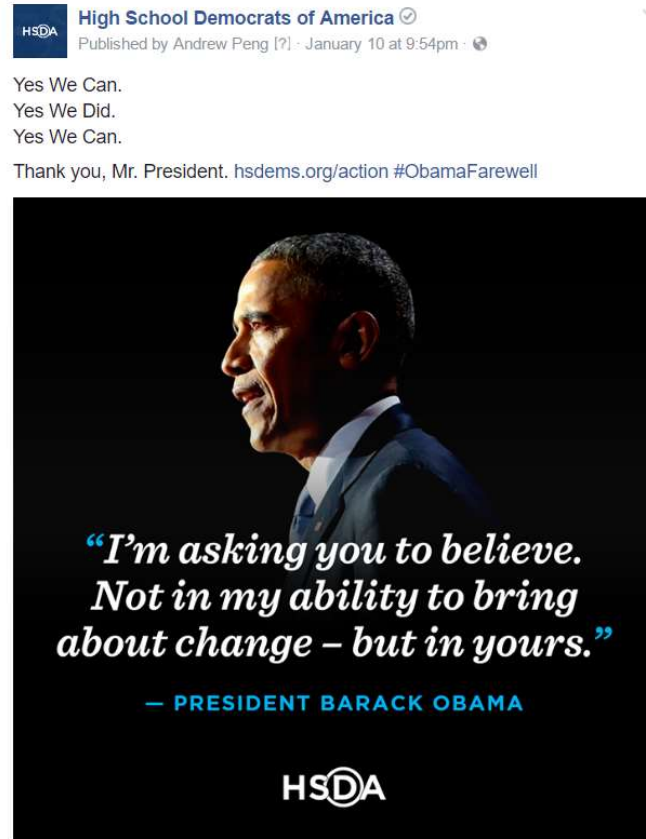
Regular, consistent content scheduling varies on each platform. However, at least a post a week is suggested.

TIMELY UPDATES

Make sure your content adds value, and make it as short and succinct as possible - even if you have no character limit. Shorter messages gain higher engagement than long paragraphs; for platforms that depend on algorithms, do not over post or share.

You are encouraged to post or schedule content around breaking news or events to boost engagement - especially when it comes to rapid response.

Additional tips: Your reach on Twitter and Facebook actually decrease with the more hashtags that you use. Limit each post to one hashtag.



FAREWELL, MR. PRESIDENT

In addition to live-tweeting President Obama's last address to the nation as commander-in-chief on January 10, HSDA used an early transcript of the speech to draft this quote graphic. It was posted the moment the President finished his speech to ensure maximum engagement.



'POTENTIAL GRIZZLIES'

After Donald Trump's nomination for secretary of education went before a Senate committee, HSDA's communications team monitored C-SPAN feeds for key moments to respond to. A graphic comparison of gun and bear deaths was created and shared.

GUIDE TO LIVETWEETING

HOW YOU'LL TWEET

- You will be using **Tweetdeck**, Twitter's service for pros. Please don't tweet from your phones. Sign in here: tweetdeck.twitter.com
- All tweets should not contain broken or incomplete English, grammatical mistakes, etc. (example: write "you" instead of "u", "are" instead of "r")
- The occasional acronym (FTW, FYI, etc) is cool though
- GIFs and emojis - when used at the right time - are A+
- Because of Twitter's character limit, don't literally try to tweet out every event or speech line-by-line. Focus on select lines that are important
- You should make every attempt to fit one relevant hashtag in every tweet

THE BASICS

Open a live-stream of an event, usually NBC News or the *Washington Post*, to watch while you tweet. You have the choice/opportunity to take a quick HD screenshot of the stream and upload it to accompany the quote. Throughout this process, have good judgment, keep your mind sharp, and be prepared for anything.

A GOOD QUOTE TWEET IS USUALLY STRUCTURED LIKE THIS:

Speaker's Last Name: "Quote goes here" #Hashtag

1. In the first tweet introducing the individual, their full name/Twitter handle, etc. must be included to establish context.
2. In the tweets following the introduction, the full name is no longer needed - however, the individual's last name or handle can be displayed.
3. GIFS ARE AWESOME! Use 'em at the correct times with the correct lines and you'll be set.
4. If a Democratic speaker is railing against a Republican, drop the occasional article for context to impress readers.
5. Don't forget to thank people!

